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A SLUMP IN HEROES.

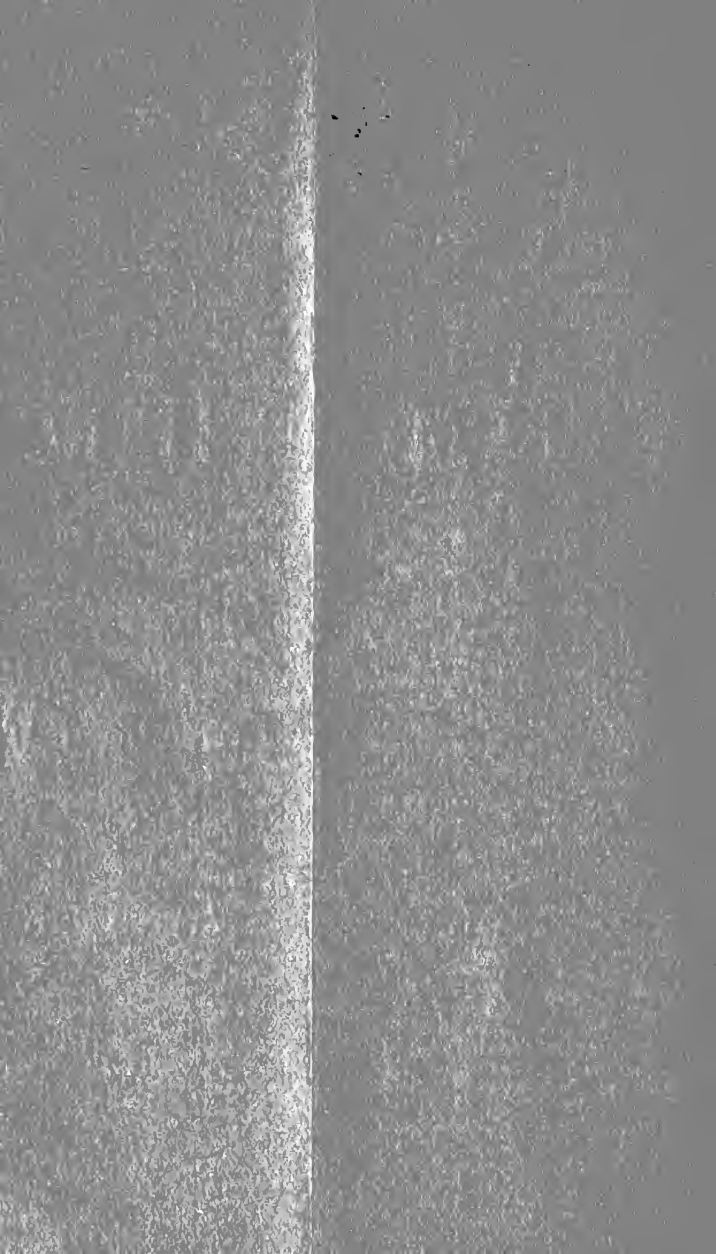


Harold Bolce



A
Transvaal War
DRAMA
WITHOUT
WARRIORS.





A SLUMP IN HEROES

(A Transvaal War Drama without Warriors)

BY

HAROLD BOLCE



JOHANNESBURG:

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DEDICATION.



To the Members of the Reform Committee who in Johannesburg's hour of peril averted war by surrendering their arms, this volume is peacefully dedicated. It was impossible, without multiplying the pages and thickening the plot, to mention all the heroes concerned in the late surrender. It will be the author's ambition, therefore, to present another drama in which no roles will be omitted.

Dramatis Personæ.

HON. SEE-SAW JOHN ROADS	. . .	<i>Wizard</i>
DR. JIMCRACK	. . .	<i>A Moss-trooper</i>
LORD CHAMBERMAID	. . .	<i>Tactician</i>
SATAN	. . .	<i>Power Behind the Throne</i>
MAJOR SWEATINGTON	. . .	<i>Master of Retreat</i>
CAPTAIN GRANNYLANDS	. . .	{ <i>Manager of the</i> <i>Military Farce</i>
SORRY JOLE	. . .	<i>Lightweight</i> ^t
F. R. STRINGHAM	. . .	<i>Keeper of the Sack</i>
EDITOR HAMSTRUNG	. . .	<i>Tuft-hunter</i>
OOM TALL	. . .	<i>A Giant</i>
CHARLIE SPLUTTERS	. . .	<i>A Weak Sister</i>
GEORGE ITCHARDS	. . .	<i>A Pseudo Hero</i>
ABE STALEY	. . .	<i>Weeping Beauty</i>
H. J. REX	{ . . .	<i>Turncoats</i>
MAX BANGERMANN		

Tin Soldiers, Citizens, Heroes, Sheroes, Messengers,
 Supernumeraries, Go-between's, Gold Hunters,
 Millionaires, Rand Warriors and
 Other Children.



A SLUMP IN HEROES.

Act 1.

SCENE I.—*Room at night in Downing Street, London. Over a desk at one end of the room is a painted group of three. Oom Tall, in the centre, and Lord Chambermaid and the Hon. See-Saw Roads on each side. At the other end of the room is a companion picture of Christ executed between two thieves. Over the door is a blue print of the solar system showing proposed accessions to the South African Bartered Company.*

(Enter three political wizards disguised as statesmen).

LORD CHAMBERMAID: When shall we three meet again in London, Capetown, or on the Rand?

HON. SEE-SAW ROADS: When the dirty work is done and the Transvaal has been won.

DR. JIMCRACK: That will be an easy task; an invitation's all I ask. On your intrigue I'll depend; stir sedition on the Rand, and I from Bechuana-land, at a signal will descend.

LORD CHAMBERMAID: Boers will fall before our raid, and our fortunes will be made.

(Exeunt wizards disguised as honest men).

SCENE II.—*Government Buildings, Pretoria, Oom Tall, a giant, with fo ded arms and bowed head is pacing up and down the Executive Chamber.*

OOM TALL : Again I hear the distant mutterings of war. For generations have my burghers been hounded by the British. Here beyond the Vaal, to escape the lust of conquest and the clash of racial war, they trekked. They've wronged no man, but live in peace. They love their life upon the lonely veld ; but now the enemy, lured by the love of gold, plots to invade our land. We'll build us forts, oil up our rusty guns and trust in God. Our adversaries fight for pelf ; we fight for home and native land. Eendracht maakt macht. God bohoede land en volk. Die Englesman wil ons land vat.

(The Giant kneels in prayer to the God of Battles. Then he rises, lights a monster briar pipe, and signs an Act of the Volksraad, banishing from the Republic all members of the aboriginal Kaffir tribes dispossessed by the Dutch Voortrekkers, lest these black claimants to the Transvaal join in the movement for political rights).

—::—

SCENE III.—*A dark stope at the Geldenhuis Deep. In the middle, a mammoth oil tank in which Maxims, Martinis, Lee-Metfords and ammunition have been smuggled. Prominent citizens of the Rand vainly endeavouring to illumine the stope with sparks of genius.*

Members of Political Funk Committee rigged out in masks and harlequin tights to indulge in pre-revolutionary orgies.

LIONMOUTH FLIPS : In this oil tank let us brew a charm to make success of insurrection sure.

ST. JOHN SCAR :—

Round about the oil tank go,
In the smuggled vessel throw
Tongue of Flips, and hand of Roads,
Which in plots hath many modes ;
Lip of Splutters, purse of Jole,
Mix well in the rebel bowl.

ALL.—Double, double, toil and trouble
Fire burn and oil tank bubble.

LIONMOUTH FLIPS :—

Cast within the boiling slime
All that's left of Rattleheim ;
Goldrink, Scar, and Harold Strains!
Throw them in in lieu of brains.
Add thereto those moral wrecks :
Bangermann and H. J. Rex ;
And the owl-wise Itchards' wit
In the stew we'll not omit ;
Let Osskins' crass stupidity
Thicken the consistency ;
And Abæ Staley's codfish rank.
Poison this politic tank
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell broth boil and bubble.

ALL.—Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and oil tank bubble.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON :—

In the oil tank let ferment
The reformers' argument—
All the sophists' tales of woe
In the oil tank let us throw ;
While the steam that shall arise
Shall obscure from people's eyes
All the intrigues of the Rand
Engineered by See-saw's hand,
So throw in the seething mess
All we know of wickedness ;
Thicken the politic plot
Till the stuff runs o'er the pot ;
Let the greed of Judasburg
In the oil tank boil and surge.

CAPTAIN GRANNYLANDS : Cool it with a burgher's blood ; then the charm is firm and good.

(In the midst of the revels the apparition of Oom Tall appears from a deeper level, bearing aloft the Transvaal ensign. Mad scramble to the surface of the marplots about the tank.)

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SCENE IV.—*Loot Sure, Randybosh, home of Cape Schemier. See-saw Roads approaches, dragging Rhodesia behind him. Jangles a bag of sovereigns and a troop of myrmidons appear, wearing the Roads collar and the insignia of high official life.*

SEE-SAW ROADS : What tidings from the Rand to-day ? Have we smuggled in successfully the armaments of war ?

FIRST MYRMIDON : Yes, my lord.

SEE-SAW ROADS : How many men beyond the Vaal have we turned into patriots ?

SECOND MYRMIDON (*Chancellor of the Exchequer, consulting stubs of cheque-book*) : To full five hundred Randites have we paid goodly sums.

SEE-SAW ROADS (*musingly*) : Five hundred patriots ! 'Tis well ; but buy some more, for in the world they're scalawags who ne'er stay bought ; and send my secret message to my rebels on the Rand that they must disavow connection with the Schemier of the Cape, for, if they win, I'll reap the harvest—and, if they lose, I must be free and ready to resign in repudiation of their nefarious scheme to steal a commonwealth.

(Exeunt slaves while the Hon. Schemier proceeds to regale himself with gin, and sinks to sleep on a hartebeest skin, murmuring ; "In ancient times all roads led to Rome ; now, all things lead to Roads.")

SCENE V.—*Time, Premature ; rooms of the Contaminated Gold Steals Company. Twelve original members of the Political Funk Committee are seated about a table pondering on how to be great although a member of the Committee.*

H. I. REX : In the words of an illustrious American, "What are we here for?" We are rich ; what shall we gain by revolution? What matters more or less some paltry thousands to a multi-millionaire? Why risk our lives and all that we possess?

GEORGE ITCHARDS (*solemnly*) : We want a revolution for political reform. None but a lofty mind can see the honourable motive in our cause. (*Averts his eyes from a picture of See-saw Roads on the opposite wall.*)

REX : What benefits will millionaires receive? Tell me that.

ITCHARDS : But we are fighting for the labouring man—the man of brawny arm and dirty shirt, whom all reformers love!

EDITOR HAMSTRUNG : And avoid.

ITCHARDS : Not so, my artful scribe ; think not because you run a falling Star that you can regulate a world and furnish wisdom to superior minds.

EDITOR HAMSTRUNG (*sarcastically*) : I'm spared such pretence, for on the Rand there are no superior minds.

E. H. V. SMELLVILLE : That's why they read your sheet.

CAPTAIN MEAN-WELL : Tut, tut, children !

ABE STALELY : Be frank. The motive for this cabal is that, if successful, the British Government shall knight and baronet us all. (*Cries of delight among the promoters of the "New Republic."*) I have the list of titles here.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE (*in chorus*) : We'll hear the list.

(*As Stalely is about to read, an empty victoria drives up, and Sorry Jole gets out. He is attired in a Barnato check suit, and is chewing tutti-frutti. Knocks at the door and is admitted.*)

SORRY JOLE : I understand that your movement promises success. I'd like to join. What can I do ?

EDITOR HAMSTRUNG : The best service you can give is to subscribe.

JOLE : Good, a name is what I crave.

SMELLVILLE : A name is what you need.

JOLE : Well, ten thousand pounds I'll give, providing that you keep the record of it secret until the new Republic's formed.

ALL : Agreed.

JOLE : Here's the cheque. (*Hands it to the Secretary.*) Ah, now I am a revolutionist. This is the proudest moment of my life.

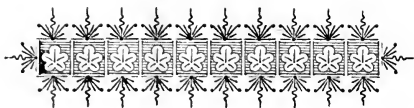
SECRETARY ST. PATRICK : How shall I secrete the record of Mr. Jole's subscription ?

LIONMOUTH FLIPS : Hide it in Harold Strains' pocket.
Then in the event of failure o'er-taking the conspiracy 'twill from the Rand be many leagues afar.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Hide it under Jole's hat.
No one would ever think of looking there for anything.

(Exit Jole in a semi-dazed condition. He proceeds to his office where a telegram from his master, Sir Blarney Tomatto, awaits him, reading—"Have nothing to do with the revolution ; it is one of Roads' games of spoof.")





Act 2.

SCENE I.—*Market Square. As the scene opens a war cloud is vainly endeavouring to darken the spot. The four streets surrounding the military rendezvous are lined with photographers armed with cameras. In the midst of the area, surrounded by an awed cavalry, stands Major F. Retreat Sweatington, in heroic posture upon a pedestal of cartridge boxes).*

FIRST CAVALRYMAN : Mark how the crash and horror of prospective war stirs our hero's blood.

SECOND CAVALRYMAN : We thank the gods our Rand hath such a soldier.

THIRD CAVALRYMAN : I grieve to think a man of such majestic mien should tempt untimely death upon the battlefield.

FOURTH CAVALRYMAN : List, the man of destiny speaks.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : My trusty band, I come to tell you of the arts and strategies of war. I tell you men that military genius lies in dodging bullets, not in getting shot. Knights errant all, what man of you desires to sleep eternally beneath the sod on yonder dreary veld to succour the Uitlandish cause? (*Painful silence among the troopers*). Not one? 'Tis well. For two decades have I my military title borne, yet not a scar disfigures me. That's generalship, say I. Fools who sink and pass away in blood on awful battle-fields may damn retreat as cowardice. Against that verdict set I my honourable career.

Retreat is ever wise. 'Tis but a synonym for strategy. I am the Lord and Master of Retreat. By it I won my laurels, and through it I live to dwell upon the story of my own heroic deeds. Had I remained to fight and in the shock of battle died——(*apprehensive groans interrupt the Major*).

FIRST CAVALRYMAN : Harrow us not with such a gory retrospect.

SECOND CAVALRYMAN : We cannot bear to think of our intrepid Sweatington left stiff and stark upon a field of war.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Now do I see by your emotion that thoughts of death inglorious are far remote. Armed are you all with rifles, bayonets, and swords. You have your uniforms and caparisoned steeds. But these equipments are not for sacrificial offerings on Transvaal battlefields. List. On every corner in this troubled town is ambushed a photographer. Before their cameras acquit yourselves like men. Then when the cruel war is over and the bones of fools lie bleaching and forgotten on yonder lonely veld, and continents are ringing with the news of strife, we shall find sweet immortality in print.

(*The photographers level their cameras at the host, which simultaneously strikes an heroic attitude. Karri Woods is photographed in two postures, one as a Burgher, the other as a Rebel, so that whatever the result he can declare himself on the side of the victors*).

—::—

SCENE II.—*Night in a military camp stationed in the suburbs of Judasburg. Beyond in the kopjes Boers are bivouacked.*

CAPTAIN GRANNYLANDS : What can we do? The Boers refuse to run.

AJOR SWEATINGTON: Yes, my lord; they know not how safe and glorious is retreat. (*Relapses into a martial dream, in which he murmurs the words of that heroic poem written for Sweatington by the Laureate of Capetown, and entitled "The Retreat of the Light-headed Brigade."*)

GRANNYLANDS: I repeat, What can we do? We've smuggled in rifles and Maxims, still the Boers hold the kopjes. We've published our ultimatum, still the Boers budge not. We have distributed badges and cigarettes among our braves, but the enemy does not weaken. Our heroes have been photographed, and from every shop window the warlike tokens frown; yet the Boers stand firm. I, as the leader of these military devices, ask what more can be done? Either the Boers or we must flee, or war is inevitable: I shudder to think of a calamity so dire. As a man of military training, I say that such event would be most fatal. 'Twould disarray our uniforms, and sacrifice our braves.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON (*starting up from sleep, fondles his sword and murmurs*):

I hold within my hand a blade
Designed for use at dress parade;
Its gleaming length when I display
Peace rules the land with gentle sway.
But when the war dogs bare their teeth,
You'll find my blade within its sheath;
Let soulless blades take human life,
My nobler metal shuns the strife;
I shine where kodaks are arrayed
To catch the glory of my blade.
I have no sinister design
To hew amain the hostile line;

Not mine all pitiless to spread *
 The veld with tumuli of dead ;
 My grander duty lies afar
 From haunts of the insane hussar,
 Where charging horse and struggling foot
 Are grimed alike with cannon soot.
 When Loveliness and Valour meet
 At Aldershot to dance and eat,
 And sing, and much beside, behold
 My golden glories all unfold ;
 Then formidably are displayed
 The useful horrors of my blade—
 In times of feast and dance and ballad
 I use my sword for cutting salad.

GRANNYLANDS : Sweatington, wake up. Poetry's all right for women and laureates, but not for warriors. It will not win our cause. Not even the rot that Alfred Austin writes will make the Boers retreat. A mighty problem is confronting us ; confound you, man, can't you suggest some strategy ?

SWEATINGTON : Myself and Karri Woods have been photographed. Is that not enough ?

GRANNYLANDS : I'm at my wits' end—but soft, what noise is that ?

SWEATINGTON (*in alarm*), Perhaps it is a Boer.

GRANNYLANDS : God forbid. (*Noise of footsteps.*) Merciful heaven help us. Soldiers take to the trenches. God pity you all ; the Boers are upon us.

(*Wild and confusing scramble, punctuated by shrieks of terror. In the midst of the pandemonium a harmless member of the Political Funk Committee looms out of the darkness.*)

[*An adaptation of a rhyme by Ambrose Bierce.]

GRANNYLANDS (*emerging from trench*): We knew it was you all the time. I gave the order just to show the superb discipline I have established here. (*Steps towards the visitor and falls over a heap of heroes who have fainted from fright. Orders the ambulance corps to gather up the fallen braves, and proceeds to entertain his guest.*

SECRETARY ST. PATRICK (*the visitor*): Why, Grannylands, you are all a tremble. Frightened you, eh?

GRANNYLANDS: Tush, a man of my military training frightened? Ah, no; I'm simply o'erwrought at the prospect of desolation confronting our stubborn enemies. They refuse to run. We must butcher them, sir. The awful responsibility hangs heavily upon me. Aid, hand me yon meat axe; I must have exercise to remove this incubus from me soul.

(*Proceeds to brandish the axe in a reckless manner, Sweatington and St. Patrick retreating across the trench*).

GRANNYLANDS (*pausing in his mad gyrations*): Yes, only men of military training know how cruel war can be. I tell thee truly I sorrow for the Boers.

SECRETARY ST. PATRICK: Don't sorrow too much, Grannylands, we've decided to send to Bechuana-land for Dr. Jimcrack to come and do our fighting for us.

GRANNYLANDS (*dropping his meat axe in the trench and executing a war dance in paroxysm of joy*). By all the gods of war at once I thank thee.

SWEATINGTON: Inspired thought; and yet in all this maze of strategy I can discern the moving shadow of our See-saw's hand. Still, thank the

gods, again, say I, for now my salad blade shall not be desecrated by the blood of Boers. Let Jimcrack come and if he be successful, I with my doughty band shall lead his triumph through the streets of yonder town. Here's to military genius and success.

(They all drink).

Exit St. Patrick.

GRANNYLANDS : Our glory as men of military training shall yet be vindicated on this sceptic Rand.

SWEATINGTON : 'Thou hast spoken. Methinks I'll sit to-morrow for a new photograph, to be entitled : "The intrepid Sweatington on the eve of war."

(Lathers his face and proceeds to shave with a bayonet ; while Grannylands retires to his tent to write a chapter in his impending book to be entitled, "How I managed the Revolution.")

—::—

SCENE III.—Grill Room of the Muses, England. Enter the Laureate disguised as a poet, and astride a goat rigged out as Pegasus. Divine afflatus is seen escaping from the windows at his approach, and the pigments in a painting of Mount Parnassus shrivel and peel off. On the wall is a legend, reading "Notice to Poetasters :—In respect to the memory of Dryden, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, no illicit intercourse with the Muses permitted." Heedless of the warning, Mr. Austin prepares to write. *(Writes.)*

* Rot is it ? Rot—well, may be—
But I'm writing it just the same ;
Do they think me a Muse's baby,
To be scared by a Laureate's name ?

(With no apologies to the following) :

* Wrong it is ! Wrong—well, may be—
But I'm going, boys, all the same ;
Do they think me a burgher's baby,
To be scared by a scolding name ?

(From the Poet Laureate's verses, entitled "Jameson's Ride.")

(As he writes, a marble figure of Tennyson rises and sorrowfully strides from the room, followed by the shades of the heroes who fell at Balaklava.)

AUSTIN : Aha, here comes the source of my inspiration.

(Enter Lord Chambermaid.)

LORD C. : How is the ode coming on ?

AUSTIN : It's about half finished ; would you like to hear it ?

LORD C. : No, I have troubles enough of my own.

AUSTIN : Just one verse, please.

LORD C. : Ah well, if I must, I must.

AUSTIN : *(Reads)*

* There are "girls" in the Gold Reef City,
There are funky warriors too,
And they cry : "Hurry up your ditty !"
So what can a Laureate do ?

Whatever I write, they'll blame me ;
It will make them howl and hiss ;
So I think it is very gamey
To immortalize rot like this.

(Lord Chambermaid swoons, and the goat, which had been devouring a lyre in the corner of the room, chokes and expires. The disturbance revives Lord Chambermaid.)

(With no apologies to the following) :

* There are girls in the Gold Reef City,
There are mothers and children to.
And they cry "Hurry up for pity ;"
So what can a brave man do ?
If even we win they'll blame us ;
If we fail they will howl and hiss ;
But there's many a man lives famous
For daring a wrong like this.

(From the Poet Laureate's verses, entitled "Jameson's Ride.")

AUSTIN : Well, what do you think of it ?

LORD C. : Think of it ? It requires no thought. It confirms me in my belief that you were made—not born. (*A vermillion hue of thought suffuses the extraordinary cheek of the poet.*)

LORD C. : All I have to say is, hurry the ode along. We want to have it ready to spring upon an unsuspecting public as soon as Dr. Jimcrack crosses the Transvaal border. I shall send a cable denouncing his filibustering raid, and shall warn him to return ; but he will not receive it in time to interfere with our anti-Transvaal plans. So haste your awful rhyme, and write him down a hero ; your crime will draw the public gaze from his.

(*Exit Chambermaid.*)

(*For two hours nothing is heard but the wheels revolving in the head of the Laureate.*)





Act 3.

SCENE I.—*Judasburg. (This scene begins and ends in confusion. Balconies on all the thoroughfares thronged with women provided with gorgeous bouquets to strew the path of Dr. Jimcrack). Wild rumours upon the street that Dr. Jimcrack has defeated all against him and is within an hour's march of the City, whereupon Major Sweatington and his horse go out proudly to meet him. They hear cannonading and take to the hills above Auckland Park, where with field-glasses they scan the distant battlefield. Seeing a solitary trooper riding desperately towards Judasburg, they valiantly intercept him).*

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Whither away so fast ?

TROOPER : I am Dr. Jimcrack's messenger. He wants help from Judasburg.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Is he surrounded ?

TROOPER : He is ; and our men are being butchered.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : That is unfortunate. And I suppose they were not photographed before the engagement, either.

TROOPER : What in h—l—

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Alas, and what can be done ?

TROOPER : Done ? why rush out and help him.

MAJOR SWEATINGTON : With these nice uniforms on ?

(The trooper gives one scornful look and proceeds furiously toward Judasburg. Sweatington and his braves deliberate a minute and then follow the trooper in hot haste, Sweatington crying out, "Vive la Retreat." This battle-cry inspires his men and they follow faster).

SCENE II.—*Members of the Funk Committee on top of Gold Steals building, scanning the horizon.*

MAX BANGERMANN (*with a rifle in one hand and a lorgnette in the other*): A troop of horse appear. (*Sensation among the Reformers*). *The members of the cavalcade can soon be distinguished. Sweatington, dust-stained and disheveled, is charging in front of the retreating heroes.*

CHARLIE SPLUTTERS : How fast he comes ; I fear he brings ill news.

F. R. STRINGHAM : Would that the trains on the Dutch railroads moved as fast.

(*They all scramble down stairs to greet their military idol, whom they lift from his foam-covered steed and carry on their manly shoulders into the Committee-rooms. There the Revolutionists wait for him to speak. He stands before them, his eyes flashing, his hair on end and blood issuing from his nostrils.*).

SWEATINGTON : The end has come.

GEORGE ITCHARDS : Has Jimcrack lost the day ?

SWEATINGTON : His life as well, perhaps.

(*Two-thirds of the Revolutionists faint ; others rush out to buy tickets for Capetown, and some hunt the deep-levels. Sorry Jole falls into a cataleptic state out of which he is aroused by someone yelling "slump" in his ear. He is carried on a stretcher to a draper's where with Rattleheim and Harold Strains he is dressed in female attire. They are shipped to Capetown, posing en route as fallen women.*).

—:—

SCENE III.—*Charge Office, Judasburg. The Lieutenant of Police is giving instructions to his Zarfs.*

LIEUT. TUSSLE : The fiasco's over. Go out and gather in the guns ; our burghers bold may need them to hunt the timid duck. Besides, what

use have revolutionists in Judasburg for guns? Perchance by cruel accident they might get hurt, for Medfords are not proper playthings for the children of the Rand; and while you're gathering in the armaments which other men can use in war, you'd better scoop the rebel tyros in, for if they're unprotected, they're liable to wander from See-saw's apron strings.

(Exeunt Zarps armed with paddles. Most of the heroes are apprehended as they emerge from the café of the Rank Club, picking their teeth with bayonets. They are lodged in gaol and charged with being "horrors of peace." In the morning all except Bangermann and Rex and Stringham find that their pockets have been picked. During the night Charlie Splutters becomes delirious and sings.)

Oh, Mr. Zarpie, do be good to me,
I'm a hero in this Judasburg, so don't belittle me ;*
They've arrested me for fighting— a thing I've never seen—
Oh, revolution, God save the Queen !

— :: —

SCENE IV. — *Court Room, Pretoria. Members of the Funk Committee drawn up in line in prisoners' dock and numbered. Attorney-General goes down the line asking questions,*

ACCOSTER *(to Secretary St. Patrick)*: You were the Secretary of the Funk Committee?

ST. PATRICK : Yes.

ACCOSTER : To what do you attribute the failure of your cause?

ST. PATRICK : To the absence of the Irish ; you can't foment successful revolution without the aid of Irishmen.

ACCOSTER *(to Captain Mean-well)* : What, say you, turned the cabal to fiasco?

CAPT. MEAN-WELL : Lack of funds.

* Adaptation of a Local Vaudeville Ballad.

ACCOSTER ; But you had the wealth of See-saw Roads to draw upon.

CAPT. MEAN-WELL : Yes ; but the sack was put in F. R. Stringham's hands.,

ACCOSTER : Ah, I understand.

ACCOSTER (*to H. J. Rex*) : Did you take up arms ?

REX : No.

ACCOSTER : Yet to the Funkers you belonged. What was your role ?

REX : I did profound thinking for the cause.

LANDDROST : Your crime is trivial.

REX (*to the Court*) : Sir, when you get to be as old as I, you may know more.

LANDDROST : Be calm ; for when I get to be as old as you, I don't expect to be in gaol. This mighty wisdom that you boast, it has not served you well.

(*At this juncture Abe Stalely, A. R. Goldrink, St. John Scar. W. Ossken, Max Bangermann, Sorry Jole, George Itchards, and Harold Strains burst into tears.*)

ACCOSTER (*to Editor Hamstrung*) : You are editor of the *Star* ?

EDITOR HAMSTRUNG : Yes.

LANDDROST : Yours is a serious offence.

EDITOR : Would you curb the liberty of the press ?

LANDDROST : You do not understand. Your crime is not political ; you run a sheet ostensibly to

circulate the news. For this you charge—this I would call obtaining money under false pretence.

ACCOSTER : Well, I will ask if you were implicated in R. S. Rodney's literary crime, entitled "Dr. Jimcrack's Ride to Judasburg?"

EDITOR (*indignantly*) : No, sir.

ACCOSTER : Did you read it?

EDITOR : Yes ; but the night after, I had a horrible dream.

ACCOSTER : What was your dream?

EDITOR : Dreamed I was reading it again.

(*Before further questions can be asked, Oom Tall strides into the Courtroom. The members of the Funk Committee shrink a foot-and-a-half in stature from fright. Colonel Roads is the next witness.*)

ATTORNEY-GENERAL ACCOSTER : Before proceeding with this witness, let me inform your honour that he is a brother of See-saw Roads.

LANDDROST : Is this true?

COLONEL ROADS (*with bowed head*) : I cannot tell a lie.

LANDDROST (*sympathetically*) : That recommends you to the mercy of the Court.

(*The Court Crier hands the Attorney-General a letter.*)

ACCOSTER (*to the Court*) : Your honour, I have just received a note signed by Max Bangermann and H. J. Rex, in which they agree to turn State's evidence if we will give them the usual reward that falls to traitors' hands. While I must leave this matter to the Court, I personally scorn their offer. I'd rather lose my case than prove it with evidence from creatures such as these. I like not men with neither honesty nor wit. Here is their written document.

LANDDROST (*to bailiff*): Get a pair of tongs and remove this paper from the courtroom. (*To Rex and Bangermann.*) Thou Janus-faced and yellow-livered rogues, my Court shall not be desecrated. (*To bailiff.*) Remove them.

(*The bailiff drags them out, and returns. He is then ordered to scatter ashes on the spot where they had been standing.*)

ACCOSTER (*to Sorry Jole*): And you claim to be a revolutionist?

SORRY JOLE: Yes, sir.

(*A rattling sound caused by the bones of William Tell, Mirabeau, and Garibaldi turning in their tombs, disturbs the Court. Jole is removed from the courtroom and the disturbance ceases. The Landdrost then pronounces judgment on the prisoners.*)

LANDDROST: The judgment of this court is that you be turned out in the Republic's back yard to play for three weeks; that during that time you be compelled to wear befitting attire, viz., sheen trews, kilts, blouses, frocks and bibs (with the exception of Sorry Jole, F. R. Stringham, Abe Staley, and Charlie Splutters, who shall be wrapped in swaddling clothes); and that you be fed on milk served in nursing bottles (with the exception of Jole, Stringham, Staley and Charlie Splutters, who shall take theirs direct from nature's milky way). It is further ordered that Rex and Bangermann be not allowed to associate with the rest, and that the water-hose be turned upon them every day.

(*The children are turned out to play according to the decision of the Court, and the Landdrost retires to his study and soliloquises:*

Oh, See-saw John Roads, you're a hero no more,
Your mountebank game turned to infantile war;
Your star has declined, and the Boers won't forget
That in genuine war you're a marionnette.



Act 4.

SCENE I.—*Time, fifth anniversary of the famous surrender of Judasburg. Place, banqueting hall of the Rank Club. Ruins of the Funk Committee drowning memories of the past in strong drink.*

H. J. REX (*rises with bottle of sour mash in his hand*) : Let me the grace of Apemantus give—

Immortal Gods I crave for pelf,
I pray for no man but myself ;
Grant I may never prove so fond
To trust man on his oath or bond.

(*Sinks back into his chair.*)

F. R. STRINGHAM (*staggering to his feet*) : This stuff
'sh gone t' m'head.

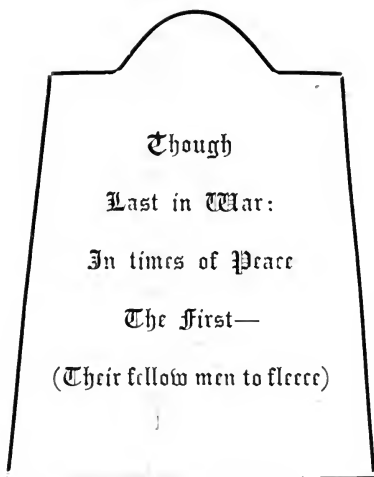
MAJOR SWEATINGTON : Always room at the top, you know.

(*Stringham sinks into a shapeless mass under the table incoherently muttering the words of that harpy hymn :*

I would not live away
I ask not to stay,
Where chances for boodle
Grow less every day.

The few remaining Ruins still in unhappy possession of their faculties decide to drink until all recollection of their bitter past is blurred from the mind. In the morning the janitor finds a

promiscuous heap of Ruins under the table. It proves to be the collective corpse of the Political Funk Committee of the Rand. The women of Judasburg decorate the Committee's tomb with garlands of dried leaves and flowers—relics of the innumerable bouquets gathered five years before to strew the triumphal pathway of Dr. Jimeruck had he entered the city. On a mausoleum of brass erected to preserve the dead from oblivion is inscribed the legend :



SCENE II.—*Plutonic regions. High on his throne of state Satan exalted sits surrounded by innumerable short-horned vassals wreathing up incense from ten thousand deadly cigarettes. Piercing cries for snowballs and beer are heard in the distance.*

Enter a fiend.

FIEND : Oh, Lucifer, Son of the Morning and Prince of the Powers of the Air, out in the sweating

ante-chambers awaiting your supreme decree are seventy hulking shades. 'They hail from Judasburg, our annex on the Rand.

SATAN : Who are they ?

(From the roster of the damned the fiend reads the names of the Political Funk Committee.

SATAN : I've been expecting them, bring them before me.

(At these words the deeps of Inferno reverberate with the shrieks and protests of the damned. At the prospect of sharing eternity with the revolutionists of the Rand, the spirits of Caesar, Charlemagne, and Rienzi cry for annihilation. In view of the added torment of such fellowship, Dives renews his importunate appeal to Abraham to send him a pitcher of ice water, even agreeing to accept it from the Judasburg Waterworks. Abraham smiles knowingly, and grants the request.

Re-enter fiend dragging in the victims.

SHADE OF NAPOLEON : O, thou eternal King of Hell, high on thy throne of royal state, which far outshines the wealth of Ormus or of Ind, do not disgrace your warrior band by harbouring this motley herd of heroes from the Rand.

SATAN : Well, they are a job lot ; I hardly think I can afford to waste my brimstone on these rebel nondescripts. Moloch, go fetch my chief adviser.

Moloch departs and returns with the shade of See-saw Roads chained by the neck to a red hot map of Africa. (Two years before, Roads had become a benefactor of his country by shuffling off his mortal coil).

SATAN (*To Roads*) : Here are some tools who worked for you when you were my Vicegerent upon another sphere.

(Roads takes one look at his former instruments and sickens at the sight).

SATAN (*To Moloch*) : Unchain him from the map ;
one torment at a time.

ROADS : Now I am accurst ; I am identified with
them at last.

SATAN : Cheer up, thou scheming fiend ; I never
blamed you for resigning in repudiation of their
work ; but come, we shall be rid of them if you'll
suggest some place to send them to.

(*Roads meditatively scratches his ear with his cloven foot*).

SATAN : Well ?

ROADS . In all the universe, I know of but a single
place where such as these will be accepted.

SATAN : Well ?

ROADS : Send them to Rhodesia.

(*All the fiends in Hell clap their cloven feet together in a
tumult of applause.*)

ABE STALEY : Why should we suffer more than other
malefactors ? For ever since the dawn of time
the tortures of this realm have been considered
quite sufficient for sinners such as we.

ROADS : My purpose is to swell the population of
Rhodesia ; I stop at nothing.

SORRY JOLE : Please, Mr. Satan, let me stay in Hell,
and I'll construct a waterworks.

(*At this, Dives staggers before Satan's throne, his eyeballs
bloodshot, his tongue protruding with the thirst of centuries.*)

DIVES (*gasping*) : No, no, never ; I've had a pitcher
of the stuff he serves as water—I want no more.

(*The protest of Dives is regarded as the opinion of an expert, and Jole's proposition is rejected. Mr. Dampson, refuses point blank to leave Hell. Satan regards him pityingly, waves a red hot pitchfork, and Dampson is metamorphosed into a malodorous vapour.*)

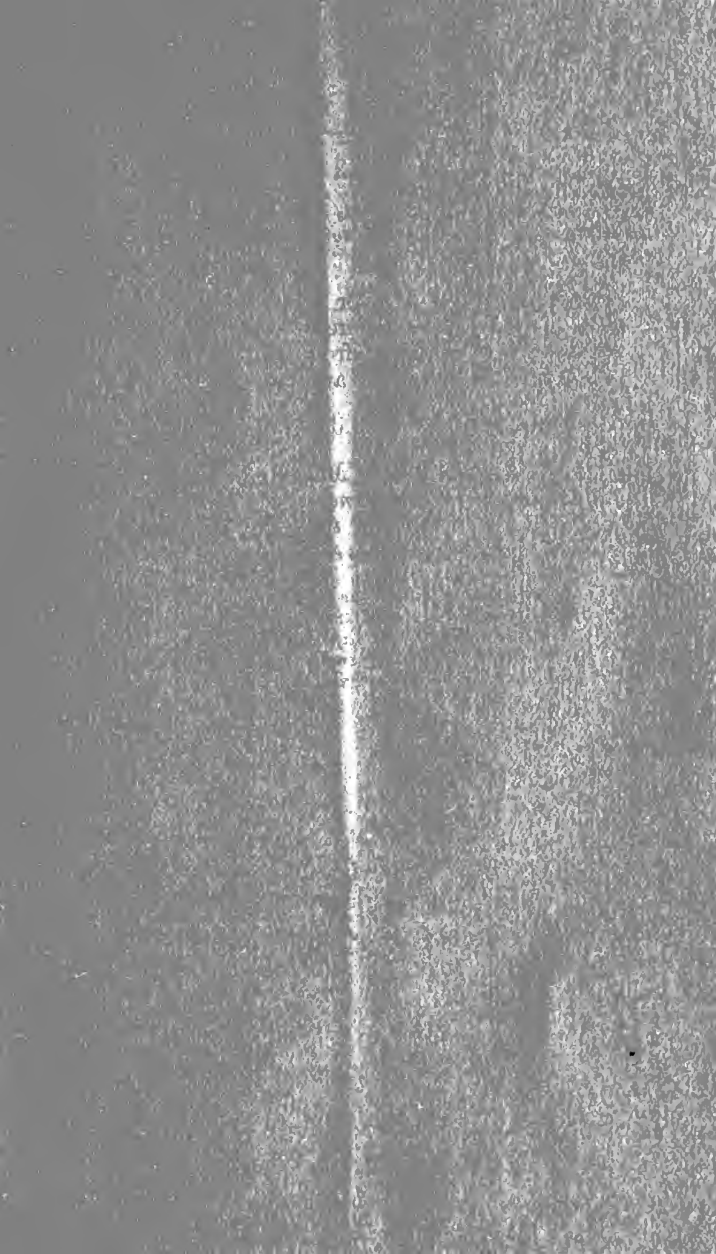
SATAN (*to Roads*): I ne'er believed in treachery ; that's where we're different, you know. So I'll just keep three spirits from Rhodesia. I speak of Jole and Bangermann and Rex.

ROADS : But what will you do with them ?

SATAN : Watch and see. (*Makes a pass in the air with his cloven foot, and Jole and Bangermann and Rex curl up and turn into doormats, and are dragged to the threshold of Inferno.*)

(*The other outcast spirits of the Rand are shunted off upon a cloud, which thunders in indignation and bursts into lightning. A rushing sound caused by the hapless shades legging it through space towards Rhodesia ensues ; and as they go they catch the echo of thanksgiving of the spirits of the damned—a riotous paean of praise terminating in the glad refrain "Rule Satania."*)







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